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G/IWI for C. PONTICELLI AND G. CAVIN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [SCUL](#) [BO](#)  
SUBJECT: Women's Issues Working Group Launches Networking Program

11. This is an action request. See para 5.

12. On November 30, DCM hosted a reception for twenty Belarusian women leaders from all spheres in society Q political, civil, and business - to provide prominent and active women from all regions in Belarus with an opportunity to network and share ideas. At the event, Embassy Minsk's Women's Issues Working Group (WIWG) announced the launch of a series of thematic lunches to discuss women's issues in more depth. Proposed themes for the lunches included women in politics, journalism, arts, and health.

13. The guests welcomed the proposal and expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to gather informally and talk with one another and with representatives from the Embassy. The guests suggested many ideas aimed at enhancing the women leaders' network - especially in the regions - in order to increase communication, share ideas, and strengthen ties and organizations. Head of the Brest Business Women's Club Larissa Istomova suggested hosting a reception outside of Minsk that would bring together women from the regions, small cities, and towns to discuss issues of concern to women. Chair of the All-Belarusian Women's League Nina Stuzhinskaya proposed introducing active young women to the established women leadership in order to train potential future women leaders. Many lamented the logistical and financial constraints that would make organizing such events difficult, but all still were eager to proceed.

14. In addition to implementing the thematic lunch series and the above-mentioned suggestions, the WIWG plans to host a digital video conference (DVC) with a prominent U.S. woman leader for young Belarusian female leaders and students. In addition, the Public Affairs Section, in coordination with the WIWG, has requested a speaker on women's issues for Women's History Month in March.

15. Action Request: Post would appreciate Department's support and input for the WIWG's activities. In particular, we request assistance in identifying a prominent American woman who would be willing to participate i a DVC with young Belarusians.

PHLIPOT